

Redgranite Correctional Institution

Community Relations Board Meeting

November 10, 2016

In attendance: Tony Smyrneos, Bob Zache, Jerry Sieg, Michael Meisner, Sandy Hautamaki, Wendy Monfils, Michelle Lehman, Natasha Ngo-Rucks, Clyde Simonson, Brian Miller, Dave Tarr, and Julie Weiss

➤ **Welcome and Introductions**

- New Security Director, Dave Tarr
- New Building & Grounds Superintendent, Brian Miller

➤ **RGCI Happenings – Warden Michael Meisner**

- RGCI Social Worker, Natasha Ngo-Rucks, is the new coordinator for our annual Polar Plunge for Special Olympics. The winter plunge is set for Friday, February 17. We will be defending our 2-year record as the highest fundraising law enforcement group. Warden Meisner invited board members to join the plunge.
- Current vacancies include 12 officers, 3 sergeants, 2 social workers, 1 librarian, 1 food service administrator, 1 program office operations associate, 1 facilities maintenance specialist – advanced, 3 teachers, 1 psychological associate, 1 correction food service leader 2, 1 recreation leader, 1 program associate confidential, 1 supervising officer 1, 1 inventory control coordinator-advanced, 1 correctional program supervisor, 1 HVAC specialist, 1 offender records associate, and 1 supervising officer 2.
 - Clyde Simonson asked if we have ever presented at area high school. Warden Meisner stated we have not, but it has been discussed. Deputy Warden Hautamaki directed the committee to see the DOC public website <http://doc.wi.gov/Home> for vacancies and job requirements. Officers and food service workers would be two examples of jobs graduates could apply for immediately after high school.
- Recruitment and Retention Reform law (Act 150) became effective on July 1, 2016. Act 150 has changed our hiring process so that positions are now open to people inside and outside of corrections through an open recruitment process.

➤ **Security Updates – Dave Tarr, Security Director**

- The philosophy change in regards to restrictive housing (RH) or segregation continues at RGCI. Some cells in the RH unit have been converted to general population cells as the number of inmates placed in RH has been reduced. Immediate sanctions for bad behavior have shown to make better gains with inmates. If needed cells can be converted back to RH cells.
- This time of year seems to create a bed crunch as county jails move inmates out more quickly to institutions. All institutions have been asked to develop an emergency plan for more bed space if needed.

➤ **Management Services Update – Wendy Monfils, Correctional Services Management Director**

- WICS 4.1 is the latest software conversion for the Division of Adult Institutions. This system converted the inmate's financial account information which has impacted how their financial obligations are paid i.e. child support, restitution, fines and court costs. With making this conversion it has eliminated staff working in two systems and brings consistency between the cashier's office and institution's application of funds towards obligations. We are working through some hiccups with the software application.
- A few changes have occurred for the inmates in terms of payment of their obligations. The institution business office has started to take deductions for restitution even if it is noted on the judgment of conviction under the extended supervision section. We had not in the past. The priority for paying off obligations has also changed. Restitution is a higher priority over court costs and we are also taking a higher percentage to pay off the restitution. This will help the victims receive their financial payment as well as helping the inmates to pay off debt sooner so the inmates have one less worry upon release.
- RGCI began using contracted canteen in August. This canteen process allows inmates to purchase the same food items, hygiene and office supplies across DAI. Keefe, the contracted vendor, will now be filling these orders instead of in-house. This keeps prices and products consistent throughout all the institutions. Pricing is kept competitive due to volume purchasing.
- We did recently offer the inmates the annual option to purchase holiday cheese and sausage. Stoneridge in Wautoma was the vendor.
- A question was raised as to why inmates are paid and what they are paid for. A majority of the institution runs on inmate labor. They are responsible for the cooking, cleaning, garbage detail, laundry, and upkeep of the grounds at the institution. Paying inmates for jobs performed at the institution allows them to buy additional hygiene, writing supplies, food items, pay off obligations, victim restitution, pay for phone calls, send money home to help support their families back home and save so they have funds to pay for housing and bills when released. Pay ranges from \$1.00 per hour, highest and fewest jobs, to \$.05 per hour. Inmates without jobs are paid \$.05, which allows us to assign them to a job if work is needed. Inmates are not paid while in disciplinary separation or when they refuse programming, school or to work. All inmates are required to get an HSED or GED before they can hold an institution job.
- The education department will be moving in the direction of Google School in the near future. This should reduce education material expenses as current textbook information and teaching materials will be available through Google providing a better educational experience for inmates. This will also help prepare the inmates to understand and work in modern technology prior to release. Chromebooks will operate on a secure network and will not have access to the outside internet.

➤ **Maintenance Department Updates – Brian Miller, Buildings & Grounds Superintendent**

- We are in the process of converting two restrictive housing wings to general population.
- The woodshop is operating with two inmate workers, so wood projects and donations can continue to be made.

- There are currently two minimum inmate workers allowed to work outside of the fence for lawn care, grounds maintenance as well as cleaning the quarry and the park in Lohrville.
 - Clyde Simonson asked if it would be possible to have inmates deep clean the buses over the summer. RGCI will look into that. It seems like a project that could be accomplished.

➤ **RYTE – Michelle Lehman and Natasha Ngo-Rucks**

- One of the unique things we do at the institution is called the RYTE program. RYTE stands for Reaching Youth Through Education and takes place most Tuesday mornings throughout the school year. Local high school and middle school students come to the institution where they hear presentations by a select group of inmates. Inmates explain how their choices led them to incarceration. At the end, students are able to sit with the inmates and ask questions. The committee was provided a pamphlet with more information on the program. Warden Meisner let the board members know they are welcome to attend.

➤ **Roundtable**

- Bob Zache from Berlin Memorial Hospital thanked RGCI for the great woodwork projects they have donated to various charity events. He was very appreciative of the work we provided for the hospitals wheelchairs through our BSI Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Refurbishing Shop. With the old Juliette Manor being torn down, law enforcement groups including staff from DCI, WCI, TCI and RGCI were able to get some real life experience busting down doors and through walls.
- Jerry Zieg, Redgranite Village President, thanked RGCI for the continued clean up around the quarry. With the new quarry rules and more patrolling, they did not see as much traffic as previous years.
- Tony Smyrneos, Vice President of Hometown bank in Redgranite let the committee know that the Wautoma branch is being remodeled with completion expected by January.